

REMARKS

This Application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 7, 2006. Claims 23-32 are pending with Claims 23 and 24 in independent form. Independent Claims 23 and 24 have been amended in a broadening fashion to remove the references to the word "halftone." In particular, the independent claims are no longer limited to halftone screens. For example, page 11, line 30 to page 12, line 4; and page 5, lines 28-30 of the specification describe screens of 600 dpi, which, at such a high resolution appear to an observer as "contone" screens known in the art. Dependent Claims 25-32 have been added by this amendment to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Support for newly added dependent Claims 25 and 29, which require a halftone screen and a multi-level stochastic screen, can be found in the specification at least at page 12, lines 5-21. This portion of the specification is described with reference to FIGs. 7(a)-7(c), which show screens having a random (stochastic) pattern with dots exhibiting multiple gray levels. Support for newly added dependent Claims 26 and 30 can be found in the specification at least at page 6, lines 6-11. Newly added dependent Claims 27 and 31 describe blending only midtone, high-contrast, or midtone and high-contrast regions of an image. Support for these claims can be found in the specification at least at page 6, lines 21-23. Newly added dependent Claims 28 and 32 recite that the first gray-level data and the second gray-level data are color matched, structure matched, density matched, or combinations thereof. Support for these claims can be found in the specification at least at page 8, line 27, to page 9, line 4; and page 9, line 11, and thereafter. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

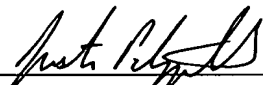
Independent Claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,956,157 (Tai (who also is an inventor of the present application)), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,396,584 (Lee). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and submits that all claims are patentable over the Tai patent and the Lee patent, taken separately or in any proper combination, for at least the following reasons.

In particular, Applicants respectfully submit herewith a Declaration under 37 CFR 1.132 signed by Hwai T. Tai, an inventor of the present application and the cited Tai patent. Such Declaration states, among other things, that an image generated according to the Tai Patent is a finalized image

that would be harmed (as far as image quality is concerned) if subjected to an edge-modification process according to the teachings of the Lee Patent. In view of this Declaration, Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have a motivation to combine the teachings of the Lee Patent with the teachings of the Tai Patent, because doing so would reduce the image quality of an image generated according to the teachings of the Tai Patent.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.